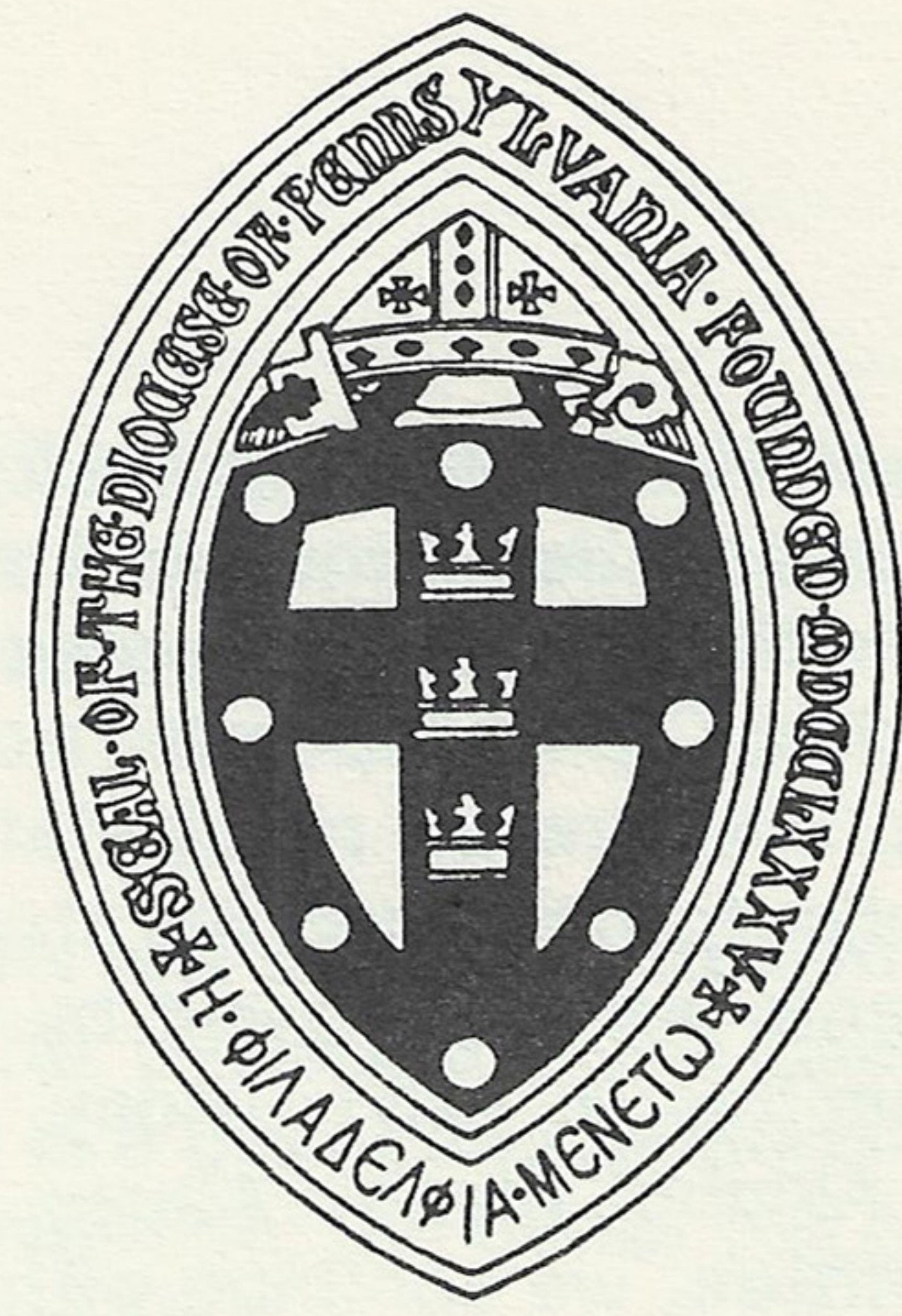




THE
DIOCESE
OF
PENNSYLVANIA

ALCOHOLISM

A CHRISTIAN APPROACH

Perspective, Policy,
and
Guidelines

Prepared by:
The Bishop's Committee on Alcohol,
Alcohol Abuse, and Alcoholism (the 4A
Committee).

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EXCERPTS

from

Alcoholism and the Church, A Call to Action.

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Prevalence in society

Alcoholism is currently recognized by all the accepted medical and health authorities as the third largest health problem in the United States today, being outranked only by heart disease and cancer. Across the nation, concerted efforts to meet this problem have proliferated within virtually every organized section of our society, including industry and all levels of government, federal, state, county and municipal.

Statistics have been gathered and are being cited which reveal not only the high mortality rates and the enormous economic costs, but the incalculable human suffering attendant to this disease as well.

It is estimated that 10% to 20% of the users of alcohol are currently suffering from one stage or another of this progressive illness. Upwards of ten million persons are directly impaired.

These victims so seriously affect an average of four other related persons that they, too, must be listed as casualties who are so emotionally distressed as to need care themselves. It is clear that the condition is so widespread as to be epidemic.

A Suggested Policy Governing the Use of Alcohol at Church Functions and on Church Property

1 Any food or beverage which contains alcohol must always be clearly labeled. The reasons for this are two-fold: First, some people choose not to drink for medical (allergy) or personal reasons; and second, some medications when mixed with alcohol can produce serious side effects.

2 We believe that alcohol is not appropriate to serve at every church-sponsored function, but if it is served in any form, non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered. Non-alcoholic beverages must be served with the same attractiveness and accessibility as those containing alcohol.

3 Although beverages and other foods containing alcohol may be offered, together with non-alcoholic alternatives, they must never be promoted in such a way as to imply that partaking of them is any kind of social requirement.

4 Alcoholic beverages cannot be sold without a license; to do so is in violation of Pennsylvania State law.

5 All other applicable Federal, State and Local Laws and Ordinances, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors, must be observed.

6 Any occasion at which alcoholic beverages are to be offered should not be openly advertised. The group of people sponsoring the event would be either a parish organization or a group of members of the parish.

7 Although these guidelines recognize the positive social value of the use of alcoholic beverages, they also recognize that drunkenness is always unacceptable social behavior.

8 It is the duty of the Priest in charge of the congregation or, in his/her absence, the Senior Warden and the Vestry, to assume responsibility for the dissemination and observance of these guidelines.

9 Invitations to affairs held on parish premises at which alcoholic beverages are to be offered should be issued only to the congregation, parish organizations, their guests and friends.

(We are indebted to the Alcohol Committees of the Episcopal Dioceses of Maryland and Washington in the preparation of the guidelines and policy.)

Prayer for the Victims of Addiction

O Blessed Lord,

You ministered to all who came to you:
Look with compassion upon all who through addiction have lost their health and freedom.
Restore to them the assurance of your unfailing mercy; Remove from them the fears that beset them; Strengthen them in the work of their recovery; And to those who care for them, give patient understanding and persevering love. Amen

Book of Common Prayer

RESOURCES: Among its resources The 4A Committee has the ability to provide intervention and referral resources for treatment.

INTERVENTION is a pastoral initiative taken towards the alcoholic who, by nature of the disease, is unable to request help in a direct and personal manner. The earlier the intervention, the better the chances are for successful treatment.

The Committee has a team of trained intervenors who will assist those in need, with concern for the alcoholic and significant persons around him or her.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES: include "The Traveling Road Show", an effective audio-visual team presentation which gives facts about the illness of alcoholism and dispels popular myths about the disease. The format of the presentation can be adapted to particular situations.

PUBLISHED RESOURCES: A wide variety of published source material including pamphlets, books, and information about Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, Alateen, Narcotics Anonymous and other referral resources is available for study and reflection.

REQUESTS FOR INTERVENTION may be made through a member of the committee or by calling the chair of the committee, Mrs. Karen Schulz, (215) 647-2369.

Any request for help or information will be honored with strictest confidentiality and pastoral concern.

The 1979 General Convention of the Episcopal Church passed a resolution that requested each diocese to appoint a committee that would develop a policy on alcoholism. Bishop Ogilby appointed a committee which formulated a procedure for rehabilitation of alcoholic clergy and a policy for use of alcohol at church functions. These documents were approved by the Bishop and Standing Committee in 1981. Today, as the Bishop's Committee on Alcohol, Alcohol Abuse, and Alcoholism, **The 4A Committee**, we continue with our policy:

(a) To **recognize** alcoholism as a disease, to **acknowledge** this in preaching and teaching. We seek to promote compassion and understanding and support through prayer for those afflicted and affected by the disease.

(b) To **regard** alcoholism as being impossible for the afflicted to change by themselves and not to regard it as a failure of the will or as a sign of weakness or immorality.

(c) To **exercise** the responsibilities of Christian caring for the clergy, church employees, and laity of the Diocese, its parishes, missions, and related institutions by providing pastoral intervention and referral resources for the treatment of alcoholism.

(d) To **educate** the clergy, employees, and laity of the Diocese, its parishes, missions and institutions, about alcoholism and the processes of intervention and treatment.

Though our committee is primarily concerned with alcohol related problems, we are also equipped to deal with drug related problems.